

APR 24 2006

Lorna A. Nishimitsu

April 11, 2006

Honorable Louis Abrams, Chairman, and
Members of the Charter Commission
County of Kauai
4444 Rice Street, Suite 236
Lihue, HI 96766

RE: Proposed Charter Amendment No. 11, Salary Commission

Dear Chairman Abrams and Members of the Charter Commission:

I submit this testimony in SUPPORT of the proposed amendment, which would allow the recommendations of the Salary Commission of the County of Kauai to become effective, unless vetoed by a "super" majority of the Council of the County of Kauai.

I was previously employed as a Deputy County Attorney with the County, and recognize the importance of ensuring that the best persons work as the Directors and Deputy Directors in the various departments of County government. The members of the public ask these employees over and over to do more work, with less staffing and support, than in the past. The County is faced with multiple issues, and attempts to balance an increasing public demand for services, growth from development and litigation based on a number of disputes. County government has become highly complex. Yet, time and again, we seem to tell our department heads and their deputies, that they should not have any salary increases, notwithstanding that the private sector is far more attractive and lucrative.

The employees who are protected by collective bargaining increases are rewarded with far more frequency than the appointees, who have no job protection or job security. In 2004, when the last Salary Commission issued its report containing recommendations to the County Council, it was clearly stated that "salaries have not kept up with inflation since 1988". In order to attract and retain highly qualified people, this needs to change.

Proposed Charter Amendment No. 11 will make a difference. We have the opportunity now to equalize the salaries between government and the private sector. I urge your support of

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this Amendment. Thank you.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lorna A. Nishimitsu", with a stylized, flowing script.

LORNA A. NISHIMITSU